



New Zealand Firefighters Welfare Society Wellbeing Initiative
“The Wolf Was Not Sleeping” proudly made possible
with support from Fire and Emergency New Zealand



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The Wolf Was Not Sleeping – Wellbeing Initiative

Executive Summary

Over the period of 2019-2020, the New Zealand Fire Firefighters Welfare Society worked collaboratively with Fire and Emergency New Zealand personnel, independent psychologists and other subject matter experts to produce a resource for the benefit of the mental wellbeing of emergency responders and their families. The concept of the children’s book “The Wolf Was Not Sleeping” takes a holistic approach to wellbeing and aligns with existing key wellbeing strategies, yet fills a void that exists regarding the support available for the families of emergency responders, that has not previously been addressed, even internationally. Preliminary results have shown the value it has already brought Fire and Emergency New Zealand by benefiting our people and their families. This paper is intended to summarise the success of the book thus far, and in turn show that it is an initiative that warrants continued support.

Background

Internationally the mental health and wellbeing of the family members of emergency responders is not well understood. Research shows that various pressures on emergency responders’ spouses and their children can potentially contribute to stress and trauma that can negatively affect spouses and children’s psychological wellbeing along with family functioning. Studies of Canadian firefighters found negative issues affected family life such as long working hours, unpredictable shifts, reduction in quality relationship time, lone parenting and family responsibilities not equally shared (Regehr et al, 2005).

While minimal research has been done relating to the mental health and wellbeing of children of emergency responders regarding normal day-to-day life, there is growing evidence that they experience their own anxieties about their parent’s safety. There is also mounting evidence that children who are exposed to parents experiencing mental health issues have an increased risk of developing behavioural and mental health issues themselves. This aligns to international studies including the Adverse Childhood Experience study conducted at Kaiser Permanente from 1995-1997.

Although the positive aspects associated with being part of a first responder family needs more research, what we do know is that families of emergency responders feel a great sense of pride at the positive impact their family member has on the community. The importance of helping others is a consistent theme within families, the firefighters take pride in the fact that the purpose of their job is to help people and these skills and goals elicit a strong positive response from their spouses and children (Carrico, C, P., 2012).



In a report recently commissioned by the Royal Foundation in London which assessed the mental health and wellbeing of the emergency responder community in the UK, specific recommendations of interest regarding families of emergency responders were given such as *'the need to make more support available for families, that is more visible and accessible'*.

The New Zealand Firefighters Welfare Society recognises that our social supports, specifically the support we receive from our whanau and close friends, is our number one coping mechanism. Equally important is the support that we can offer our whanau and friends, by giving them an awareness of our role and a platform to openly discuss anything surrounding it. We also recognise that one of the biggest challenges emergency responder organisations face is firstly ensuring their personnel know how to recognise when they need support and secondly, knowing the right avenues to take to find the support needed for them.

It was for these reasons that the idea to create a children's book to help initiate conversations within the whole whanau and act as a gateway for a holistic wellbeing initiative was born for emergency responders and their families.

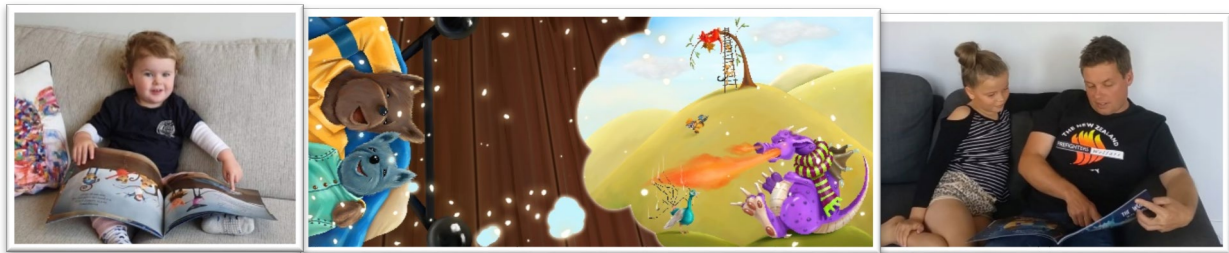
The Wolf Was Not Sleeping

In 2019 the journey began to develop a bespoke book specifically for the children of Emergency Responders, with the New Zealand Firefighters Welfare Society commissioning children's author Avril McDonald (see Appendix A for Authors note), to write this special book. From the start work was carried out to ensure the objectives of the book aligned with existing wellbeing strategies and the values of Fire and Emergency NZ. In June 2020 the New Zealand Firefighters Welfare Society sent all members a copy of the book "The Wolf Was Not Sleeping". This was followed up with Fire and Emergency New Zealand making available 6000 books for personnel nationally. Distribution was coordinated regionally ensuring inclusion of all personnel, non-operational or operational (see Appendix B for map of book distribution).

The objectives of the book were:

1. To provide families with a tool to address any concerns that they or their children might have regarding a family member's role in Fire and Emergency NZ
2. To initiate conversations within families around the role that a family member has in Fire and Emergency NZ and any concerns that the family may feel about that
3. To strengthen the connections between the families of our people, and the teams our people work with at Fire and Emergency NZ

The resource addresses these objectives throughout the book through a variety of ways using key messaging and the power of story. The negative impacts of our roles are addressed simply by engaging both the child and the reader, helping initiate conversations and reframe perceptions together. The positive impacts of our role as an emergency responder were incorporated throughout the book by highlighting a sense of pride and inclusion, that encompassed the importance of strengthening relations with both the teams we work with and our team at home.



A flyer was incorporated into the back of the book as an additional means of connecting with personnel and their families. One side was to be used as a caregivers/users guide to maximise the intended use and highlight the tangible tools. The other side was aimed to increase awareness of mental wellbeing and reiterate the different support avenues available to Fire and Emergency personnel and their families as well. The book as an additional resource to be used in conjunction with existing support mechanisms has already been regarded as a beneficial tool to help support not only our people, but their families. Unlike a lot of wellbeing programmes or initiatives, because the book is a gift for the family, there is high engagement with it and with the messaging we chose to include by way of a flyer in the book.

Additionally, The New Zealand Firefighters Welfare Society have designed a new “Wellbeing Hub”, with the objective that the “Hub” is accessible to everyone, especially our families. The site links in with the book, with additional resources and information for children from Avril McDonald. The intent of the site is to provide an interactive enjoyable experience, where easily accessible information, resources and tools can be found that provides added awareness and reiterates the avenues of support available for the whole family. It is the aim of the New Zealand Firefighters Welfare Society to keep the content new, with up to date information. Working collaboratively with Fire and Emergency NZ will ensure our messaging aligns, this will allow our people to receive the support needed, when they need it.



Validation

In April 2020, prior to the distribution of the children's book, members of the New Zealand Firefighters Welfare Society were sent a survey to gauge the need for the resource/book we were proposing to offer them (see Appendix C for full survey report). Subsequently, in July 2020, after the book was distributed a follow up survey was sent to the same group to assess if the book had met their potential needs (see Appendix D for full survey report). The results of the survey were as follows:

- 40% of respondents indicated that children in their lives have shown concern or worries about their role with a further percentage indicating that they felt under-equipped to deal with the issue.
- 77% of respondents indicated that the book helped initiate conversations about their role with children and family.
- 84% of participants agreed that the accompanying flyer gave their families added awareness about mental health and the support available.

The following comments were also collected from the surveys:

- *This has become my son's favourite book. It opened up for conversations about what I do when the siren goes, and he has become less worrisome when I am away and doesn't wake in a panic if he hears it in the night. Overall an amazing tool for my little man and me, and extra special bonding time when we read and discuss it together.*
- *I appreciate the book and the message it contained. It definitely came at a time when my kids were adjusting to my having started working full time as a fire fighter. It provided a forum for discussion and was a fun way to put across a serious message.*

In addition to the qualitative and quantitative investigations around the book, the development of the book has been both supported and endorsed by clinical psychologists (See Appendix E for full endorsements). Their guidance ensured the messages ingrained in the book aligned with our objectives.



Conclusion

Research shows that our greatest support as emergency responders comes from our whanau and friends, but we don't always have the tools to realise that we might need support ourselves or how to give and receive it. Creating the initiative of gifting a highly engaging book to emergency responders not only helps open up conversations within families, it also helps emergency responders give themselves (through giving their children) 'tools for life' in having healthy conversations, recognising when they might need support themselves and where to find the right support to suit their individual needs. Strengthening support holistically through our organisations will continue to increase positive organisational culture for Fire and Emergency New Zealand. This cannot be achieved without high level collaboration going forward, "The whole is greater than the sum of all parts", we must continue to work together as one to support our people and ensuring best practices are more visible and accessible. Going forward this is the approach needed to advance the agenda of mental wellbeing for emergency responders.

References

Regehr, C., Dimitropoulos, G., Bright, E., George, S., & Henderson, J. (2005). Behind the brotherhood: Rewards and challenges for wives of firefighters. *Family Relations*, 54(3), 423-435.

Carrico, Catherine Phillips, "Look inside firefighter families: a qualitative study" (2012). Dissertations. Paper 89, 178-179.

Written on behalf of the Board of the New Zealand Firefighters Welfare Society by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kris Kennett'.

Kris Kennett

Station Officer – Blue Watch

FENZ, Dunedin Central Fire Station, Te Kei

NZFFWS, New Zealand Firefighters Welfare Society Regional Representative, Te Kei





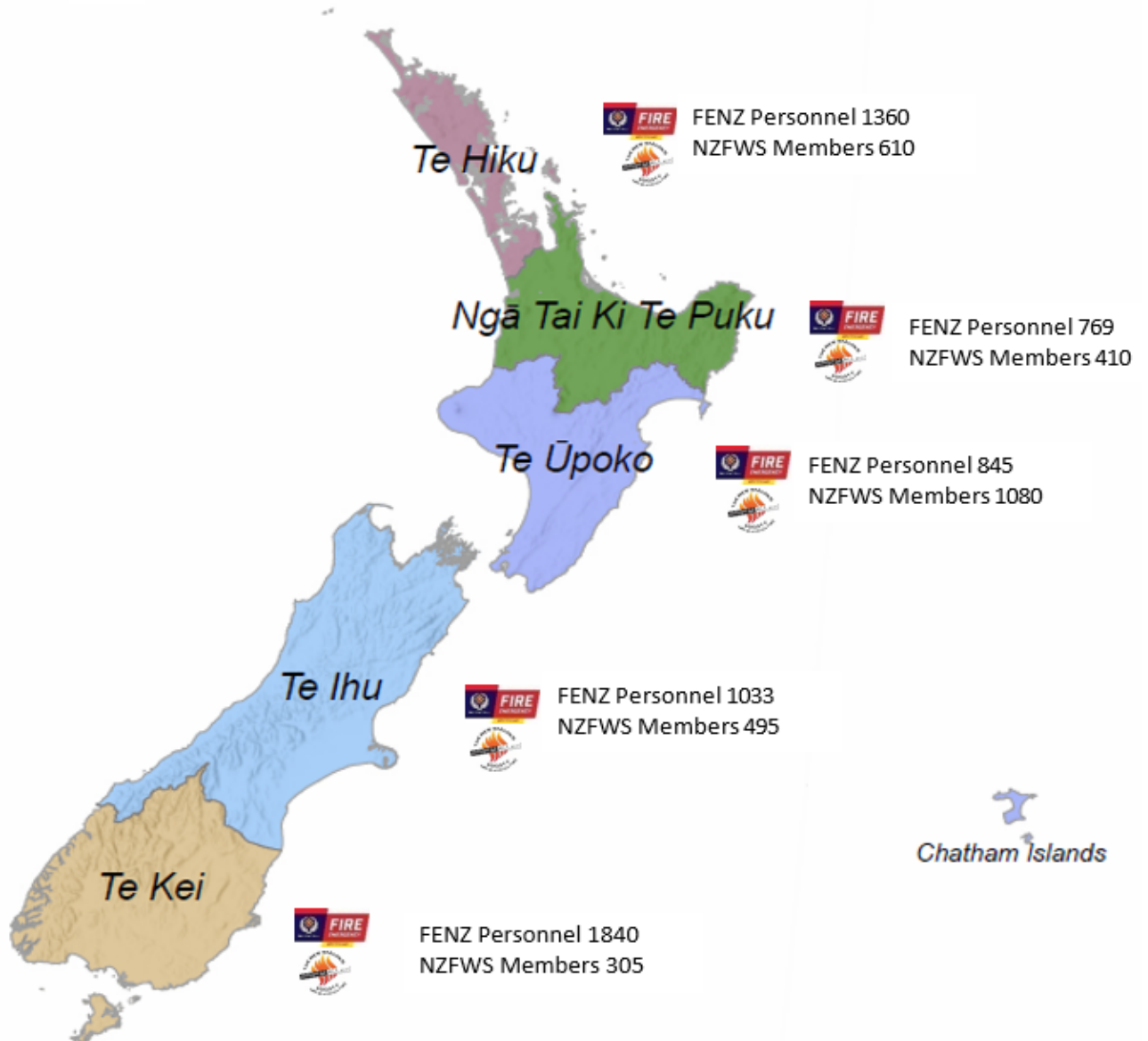
Appendix A - Comments by Avril McDonald, Feel Brave Best-selling author and founder

I was thrilled to be able to help bring a resource to life for NZ Firefighter personnel using the Feel Brave characters which can help children of first responders who might feel anxious about their parent or careers role. Regardless of whether a child of a first responder feels any anxiety or not, the book also helps open conversations between families which (by default), gives the whole whanau emotional tools for life. As parents or carers, we often think that we have to have all the answers when tough emotions arise, but we don't have to have the answers, we just have to have the conversations to help process our feelings and cultivate positive emotional wellbeing. With the NZ Firefighter's Welfare Society adding all of the other Feel Brave story content to their wellbeing hub, Fire and Emergency personnel now also have a full tool kit of strategies to help their children (and themselves) across a range of areas that can be a challenge to find strategies for.

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Appendix B - Map of Book Distribution



*FENZ, Books requested by Fire and Emergency NZ Personnel
 *NZFWS, Books sent to New Zealand Firefighters Welfare Society Members



Appendix C - First Survey, Pre-Book Distribution

Executive Summary

Overall, the results of the survey showed that the majority of participants had children in their lives that showed concerns or worries regarding their role at Fire and Emergency New Zealand, but that they felt equipped to address/respond to it. The most common reason cited for being concerned was for the physical safety of the person in question, while the most common method cited for addressing the concerns was to discuss the safety precautions taken in the role and the teams that they work in.

While the above findings are true for the majority of participants, it is important to acknowledge the group of participants who had children in their lives that showed concerns or worries, but who did not feel equipped to address/respond to those concerns.

Introduction

The following report shows data collected in the New Zealand Firefighters Welfare Society Children's Book Survey, which ran from the 2nd to the 28th of April 2020. Of the 2,850 members of the Welfare Society who were sent the survey, 1,160 people responded, giving a response rate of 41%. The survey included the following two questions which participants rated their agreement to, and were also able to comment on:

1. The child(ren) in my life have expressed concerns or worries regarding my role at Fire and Emergency New Zealand.
2. I feel equipped to address/respond to those concerns or worries.

Note that extracts from comments have been used in the following report. These extracts have not been edited in anyway, meaning spelling and grammar mistakes have not been corrected.

First Question: The child(ren) in my life have expressed concerns or worries regarding my role at Fire and Emergency New Zealand

Ratings

All participants rated their agreement to both questions using a seven-points agreement scale, ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The spread of responses to Question 1 is shown in Figure 1.

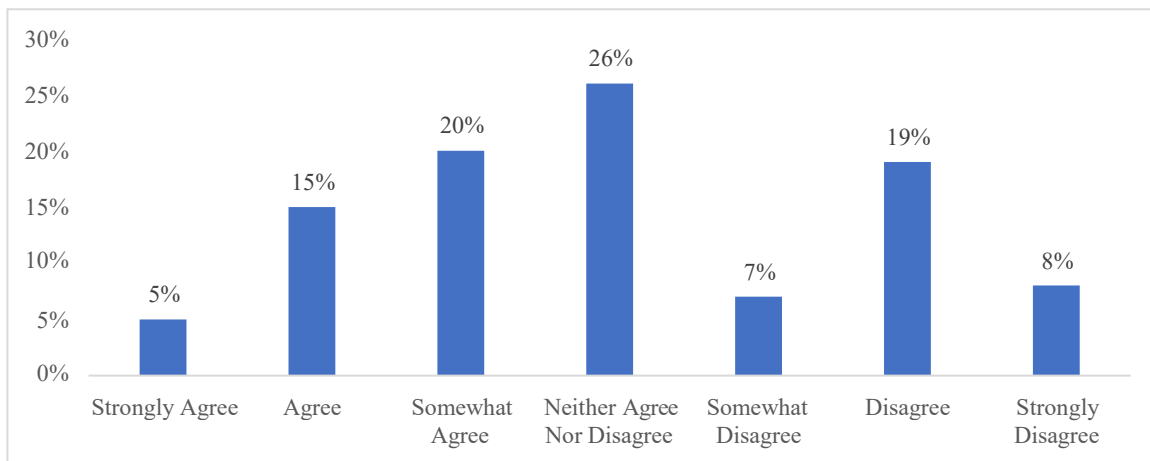


Figure 1. Percentage of participants that selected each of the agreement options for Question 1.

Comments

Of all the participants, 550 chose to leave a comment. Of the comments, 192 were removed for not answering the question. Comments that were removed included the participants stating they had no children, or that they felt their children were too young to express concern or worry. The remaining 358 comments represent 31% of all participants. These comments were separated into those that indicated their children had and had not shown concern or worry respectively. The distribution of comments between these themes is shown in Figure 2.

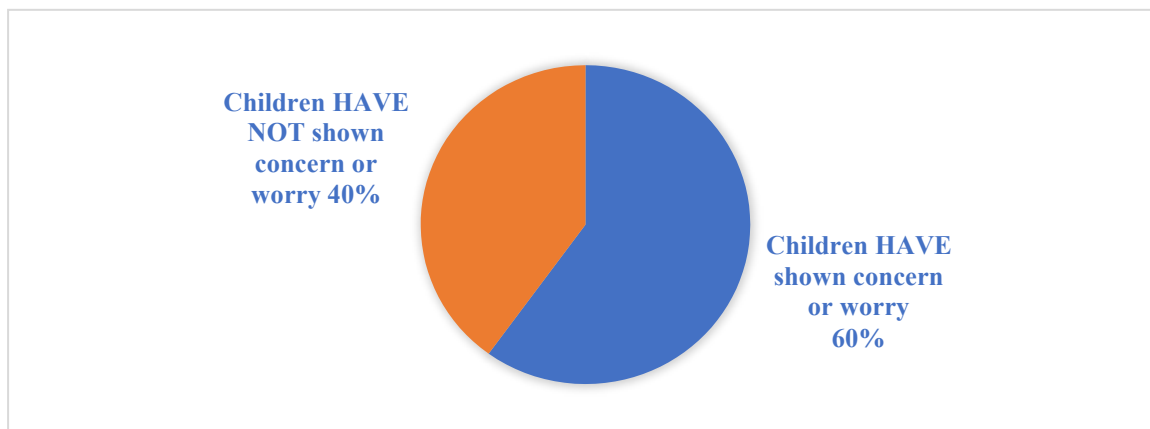


Figure 2. The percentage of participants who indicated their children had or had not shown concern or worry respectively.

Of all comments indicated that the children of participants had shown concern of worry, six main themes were revealed regarding how/why those children showed concern. The theme with the greatest number of comments showed that children had concerns or worries about the physical safety of their family member. The next most populated themes showed the concerns were related to what the children had seen in the media, and to their family member not being at home. The full list of themes, and extracts from those themes, are shown in Table 1.

Why/how the children show concern.	Number of Comments	Extracts of Comments
Have concerns about physical safety of the adult	96	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grandchildren worry if I am safe at car crashes - Dad, will you ever get burnt one day? - My children have talked about what if? what if you get hurt? What if there is another car accident while you are at the first one?
Have concerns after seeing what is in the media about fire fighting	29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - both my daughters have throughout my service had concerns when "large incidents" have hit the news - They only see negative things on the media, about injuries and danger. - With the amount of social media these days they see what dangers and sights we face.
Have concerns about the adults not being home or missing events.	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any concerns are normally to do with the amount of overtime I do and Mum being at work... again. - Daughter played up when I went to work and was away for an extended time more than the routine. A phone-call and latterly Skype call alleviated this pretty quickly.
Have concerns about the mental health of the adult.	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - concern has been expressed when calls have been particularly draining mentally - They wonder about effect mentally when attending MVAs and medicals.
Have concerns about carcinogens	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - My son has asked if I'm going to get cancer - Worried about the insulation of inhaling smoke and being safe.
Become scared when they hear the alarm	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Always freaks out when the alarm goes off that I will have to leave him - My 2.5yo Daughter seems to get anxious when the fire siren goes. She is also acutely aware of sirens in general and associates this with her daddy as a firefighter. - My youngest has often cried when the siren has sounded at night due to me going out suddenly when my oldest has often shown concern that I may not return.

Table 1. The themes and extracts of comments indicating that the children of participants have shown concerns or worries regarding their role at Fire and Emergency New Zealand.

Of all comments indicated that the children of participants had not shown concern of worry, two main themes were revealed. The theme with the greatest number of comments showed that children only showed pride or interest in the role of their family member. The second theme indicated that the reason the children had not shown concern or worry was because the family member had explained the safety precautions that they take in their role and the teams they work in. The two themes, and extracts from those themes, are shown in Table 2.

Alternatives to showing concern	Number of Comments	Extracts of Comments
Only show pride/interest	24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>My children see me as a hero. When I bring the fire truck to their day care they are so happy, along with their friends.</i> - <i>My kids have always shown pride but not concerns.</i> - <i>They fully support, am proud and excited at being part of the fire family.</i>
They are not concerned because of discussions about safety precautions taken and teams worked in	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>It's important that children understand that we have the training, equipment and most importantly the team around us to make the job as safe as possible and our intention is to always come home safe.</i> - <i>My children always knew I was well trained to cope with any situation that I may have been be involved with. They also knew I had well trained and reliable crew members with me.</i>

Table 2. The themes and extracts of comments indicating that the children of participants have not shown concerns or worries regarding their role at Fire and Emergency New Zealand.

Summary

Overall, the results from Question 1 show that the majority of participants have children in their lives that have shown concern or worry in regard to their role at Fire and Emergency NZ. This is illustrated in the ratings of agreement to the question, in which 40% of participants indicated a degree of agreement, while only 34% of participants indicated a degree of disagreement. Additionally, 60% of the comments from Question 1 fell into the theme of children having shown concern or worry.

A wide range of reasons were cited by participants for the children in their lives having shown concern or worry. While the most common reason was physical safety, other reasons included the media, absence at home, mental health, carcinogens, and the sound of the siren.

Two main themes came from participants who indicated that the children in their lives had not shown concern or worry for their role. Firstly, that their children showed only pride or interest for their role, and secondly, that discussions about safety precautions taken in the role and the teams worked in were enough to prevent any concerns or worries.

Second Question: I feel equipped to address/respond to those concerns.

Ratings

The spread of responses to Question 2 is shown in Figure 1.

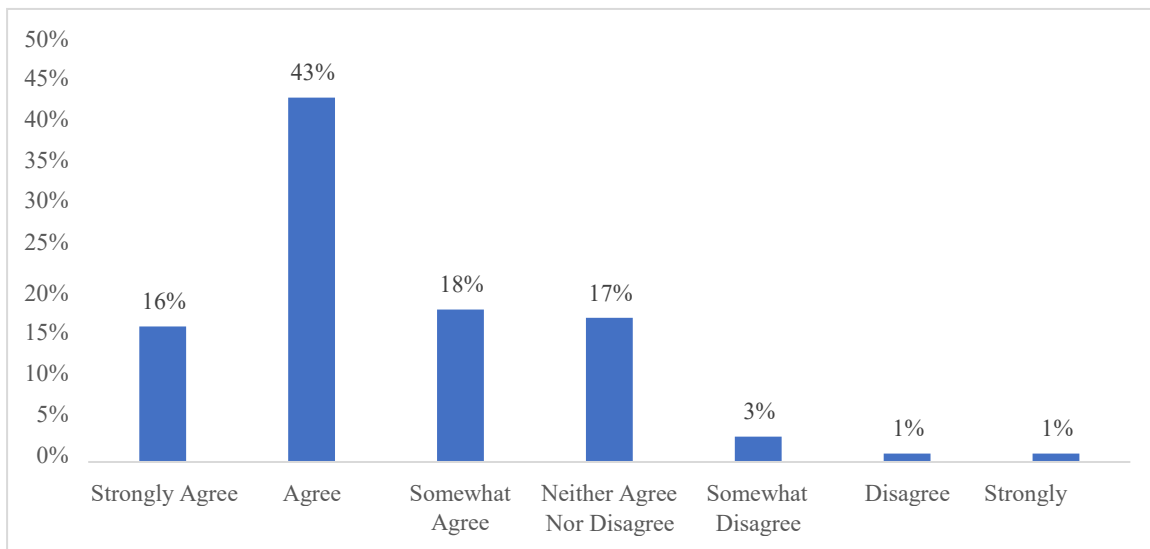


Figure 3. Percentage of participants that selected each of the agreement options for Question 2.

Comments

Of all the participants, 422 chose to leave a comment. Of the comments, 123 were removed for not answering the question. Comments removed included the participants stating they had no children, or that they felt their children were too young to express concern or worry. The remaining 299 comments represent 26% of all participants. These comments were separated into four main themes, which are shown in Figure 4.

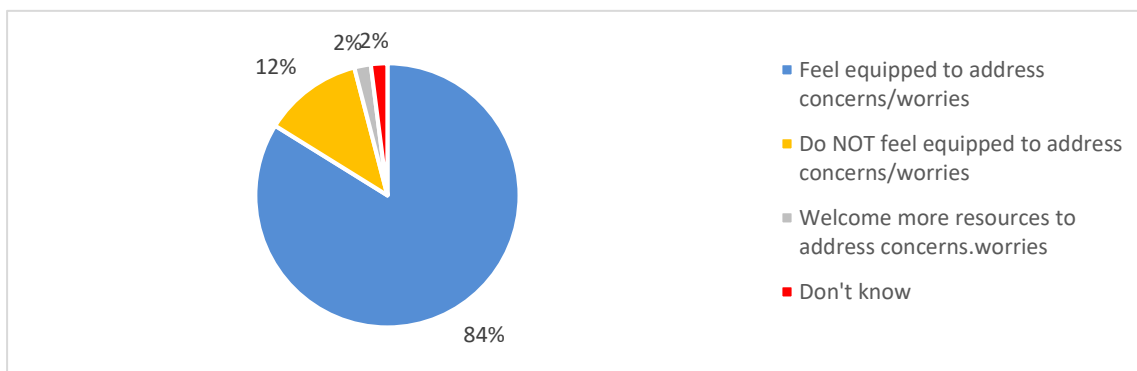


Figure 4. The four main themes from the comments in Question 2, and the percentage of participants who commented in those themes.

The theme with the greatest number of comments in Question 2 indicated that participants felt equipped to address/respond to the concerns of the children in their lives. The comments in this theme were broken down into four subthemes, specifying how they felt equipped. These subthemes, and extracts from comments, are shown in Table 3.

How they feel equipped	Number of Comments	Extracts of Comments
By telling them about the safety procedures	78	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Can tell them my training and experience helps eliminate dangers.</i> - <i>Discussed safe person concept and that we are never on our own so there's others to look after us.</i>
By using good communication and openness	55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>I always give clear answers that are easily understandable to my family.</i> - <i>I feel so far that by using good communication we have been able to address this.</i> - <i>I talk them through what i do. Easy.</i>
By having lots of experience in addressing concerns	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>I feel I'm more equipped through experience than with the tools/resources that's I'm aware of that are out there</i> - <i>I feel my age, manner and experience has helped me with addressing any concerns.</i>
By telling them how the job is there to help people	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Explain to him when I get home how we help people without being graphic.</i> - <i>My wife and I always tell our daughter that things are ok and that daddy is helping people.</i>

Table 3. The subthemes and extracts of comments indicating how participants felt equipped to address/respond to concerns of the children in their lives.

The remaining themes within the comments to Question 2 could not be broken down into sub themes. Table 4 shows those themes, as well as extracts of comments within those themes.

Theme	Number of Comments	Extracts of Comments
Do not feel equipped	37	<p><i>problem being that I did not know at the time they were worried. :(This became evident when the children became adults.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>I have trouble dealing with some things myself, let alone trying to help my children deal with them.</i> - <i>I try to have the answers but I don't think I do.</i> - <i>If they would have worries I would NOT be equipped to address their concerns</i>
Welcome more resources to address concerns/worry	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>any help would be great moving forward</i> - <i>I worry that one day I will be asked something I'm not ready for, all low key for now but more tools in the tool box is always useful</i> - <i>any help to get to a child's level is appreciated</i>
Don't know	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>I guess I do, hard to know till you try it and it does or does not work...</i> - <i>I feel like I have a good answer stored but will find out when I use it if the concerns come up</i> - <i>it's never been an issue so don't know</i>

Table 4. The remaining themes and extracts of comments from Question 2.

Summary

Overall, the results from Question 2 indicated that the majority of participants felt equipped to address/respond to the concerns or worries of the children in their lives. This is illustrated in the ratings of agreement to the question, in which 77% of participants indicated a degree of agreement, while only 5% of participants indicated a degree of disagreement. Additionally, 84% of comments from Question 2 fell into the theme of feeling equipped.

The majority of those who felt equipped to address/respond to the concerns or worries of the children in their lives felt so as a result of communicating the safety procedures that are in place in their role. This is consistent with the results of Question 1, in which participants whose children had not shown concerns or worries indicated that discussing the safety procedures in the role had prevented those feelings.

While the majority of participants indicated feeling equipped, it is important to acknowledge that there were participants that did not. Including those that rated neutrally, 22% of participants did not agree to feeling equipped to address/respond to the concerns or worries of the children in their lives. Similarly, 16% of comments indicated participants didn't feel equipped. Given that participants may have felt uncomfortable indicating that they felt unequipped, it is also possible that these numbers are underrepresented.





Appendix D - Second Survey, Post-Book Distribution

Executive Summary

Overall, the results of the survey indicate that the book was well received, and helpful to the participant's families. The most common response when asked how often the book will be read was "once a month". While the initial survey showed that the majority of participants felt equipped to address the concerns or worries of their children, the current survey found that the majority of participants found the book helped them have those conversations with the children. Similarly, the majority of participants agreed that the flier included in the book gave their family added awareness about mental health and the support that is available.

Introduction

In April 2020 a survey was run by the Welfare Society among its members in order to assess whether children expressed concerns about the role their family member has at Fire and Emergency New Zealand, and whether their family member felt equipped to address those concerns. The results of the survey revealed that the majority of participants had children in their lives that showed concerns, but they felt equipped to address/respond to it. However, a portion of participants that had children in their lives showing concerns did not feel equipped to address those concerns.

After every member of the Welfare Society received a copy of the children's book "The Wolf was not Sleeping", containing a flier with messaging about mental health and how to get help, another survey was conducted. The following report shows data collected in that survey which ran from the 22nd of July to the 19th of August 2020. Of the 2,850 members of the Welfare Society who were sent the survey, 553 people responded, giving a response rate of 19%. The survey included the following question and assertions:

1. *How often has/will this book be used in your family or by your friends?*
2. *The book helped me have conversations about my role with the child(ren) in my family.*
3. *The flyer in the book gave my family added awareness about mental health and the support that is available.*
4. *Please feel free to add any comments or thoughts about this book or flier from you or your family.*

Note that extracts from comments have been used in the following report. These extracts have not been edited in anyway, meaning spelling and grammar mistakes have not been corrected.

1. How often has/will this book be used in your family or by your friends?

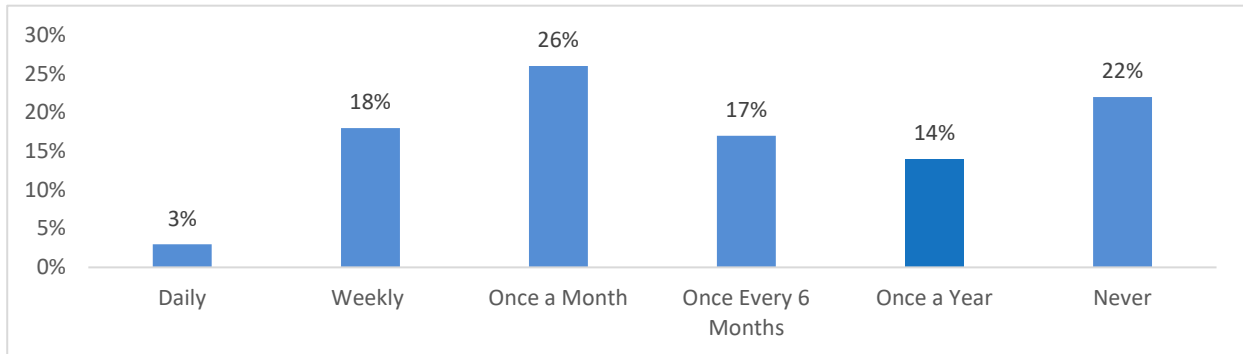


Figure 1. Percentage of participants that selected each of answers provided for Question 1.

Of all the participants, 173 chose to leave a comment. Of the comments, 34 were removed for not being informative. An additional 43 comments referred to not having children to read the book to, while 33 referred to their children being either too old or too young. The remaining 63 comments represent 11% of all participants.

Theme	Number of Comments	Extracts of Comments
Use it when children visit	19	- I do not have children, but my niece loves this book and wants it read every time she comes over - When the grandkids come over - they love it
Gave the book to friends or family	15	- Family friends use the book regularly - I handed it to my Son to share with my Grandchildren
Gave the book to the community	12	- We gave it to our Granddaughter who is a teacher at Kaiapoi Borough School and is used very often - I do not have anyone in my life currently to share this with. I am going to give it to my local library, as we have a volunteer fire department
Children like reading the book	12	- Boy 3 YO loves it and wants the wolf story - The children love it, now encouraging the story from nightly to weekly to maintain interest by the children (And the storytellers!!!)
Didn't like the book	5	- I read it to my children once but felt the themes didn't line up with how we explain my job to the children - Initially daily, however the use of the book lead to nightmares initially.

Table 1. The themes and extracts of comments indicating how often the book will be used in the family or by friends.

2. The book helped me have conversations about my role with the child(ren) in my family.

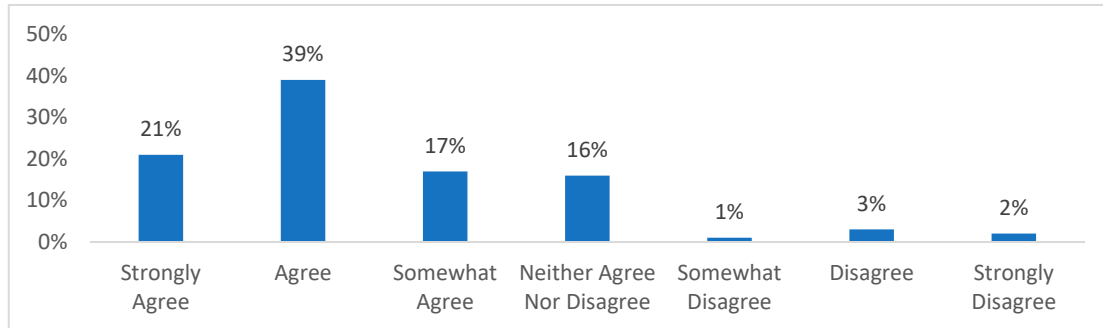


Figure 2. Percentage of participants that selected each of agreement options for Question 2.

Of all the participants, 71 chose to leave a comment. Of the comments, 56 were not related to the question. The remaining 14 comments were separated into 3 themes, shown in Table 2.

Theme	Number of Comments	Extracts of Comments
The book had negative impacts	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Depends on the age of the kid, Scared mine - He was almost 4 when he saw it. Old enough to know I'm a firefighter but too young to know its dangerous and I could get hurt. Now he gets very worried and upset whenever I run out - It was more threatening to the grandchildren than helpful using a wolf analogy - Our youngest granddaughter wouldn't have anything to do with the book she was terrified of the wolf - Really well illustrated book and I love the concept. Unfortunately, my son didn't worry beforehand but does now!
The book would be useful under difference circumstances	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Could be helpful to appropriate families - I dont have any children however i found the book great as it was clear in the message - maybe you should do one for the - community that we can give out - especially small communities - I was impressed with the book and had I had children I would have used it. - If I had children at home it would be a a useful item to help explain why I leave home at certain times - If my children were younger it certainly would have helped.
The book had positive impacts	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A good learning tool for little people - Content was very good - My children are grown up but the book has given my friends children the opportunity to ask questions about my job/role - and they are eager to know more. - We had conversations about the book and the 11-year-old was most interested in the emotionality of the story - she talked about empathy and caring

Table 2. The themes and extracts of comments indicating if the book helped people have conversations with their family about their role.

3. The flier in the book gave my family added awareness about mental health and the support that is available.

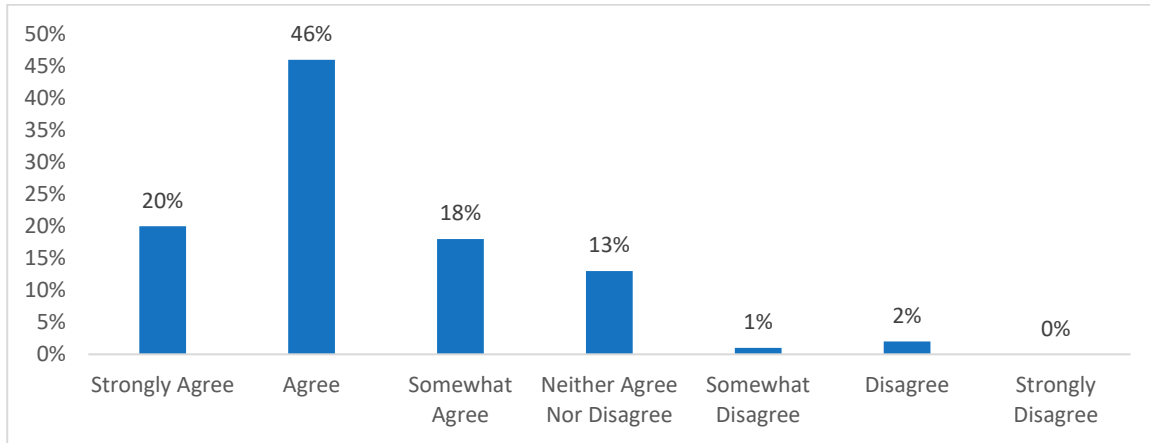


Figure 2. Percentage of participants that selected each of agreement options for Question 3.

Of all the participants, 62 chose to leave a comment. Of the comments, 31 were not related to the question. The remaining 31 comments were separated into 4 themes, shown in Table 3.

Theme	Number of Comments	Extracts of Comments
The flier had a positive impact	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To be honest this flyer generated a conversation between myself and my partner, she did not realise such support was available to our whanau and did not know how to approach the conversation if she noted me bringing home emotions from calls. - Very good certainly makes good conversations I think helps to bring the family closer
The family was already fully aware	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I was already fully aware of the support available through various channels
Would be useful under difference circumstances	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I think that it was useful, just not for me and my situation - Would strongly agree that when my kids were younger we would have used it
The flier did not have a positive impact	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The services promoted are ok in some instances but I still believe that there should be a level of professional intervention freely promoted and available as a first port of call, rather than the last cab of the rank. Going through some of those support services can often delay the inevitable assistance someone may require in certain circumstances. The organisation should have a list of clinically trained psychologist's that are readily promoted and available to all staff.

Table 3. The themes and extracts of comments indicating if the flier provided added awareness about mental health and support.



4. Please feel free to add any comments or thoughts about this book or flier from you or your family.

Of all the participants, 272 chose to leave a comment. Of the comments, 231 spoke positively about the book, while 17 spoke negatively. Examples of positive and negative comments are shown in Table 4.

Example Positive Comments

- *A clever and well-presented initiative. This book puts concerns that children may have into perspective and makes them realise that we work in a team of workmates that look out for one another. The style of the book is one that kids enjoy and works far better than a more sterile and clinical approach would.*
- *I think it is great and should continue to be given out to members with kids or who need or want it.*
- *I appreciate the book and the message it contained. It definitely came at a time when my kids were adjusting to my having started working full time as a fire fighter. It provided a forum for discussion and was a fun way to put across a serious message.*
- *I Gave this book to my 9-year-old Granddaughter who was having nightmares and was frightened after enduring earthquakes where she lives. It helped my son explain to her and she was able to discuss her fears with him.*
- *This has become my son's favourite book. It opened up for conversations about what I do when the siren goes, and he has become less worrisome when I am away and doesn't wake in a panic if he hears it in the night. Overall an amazing tool for my little man and me, and extra special bonding time when we read and discuss it together.*

Example Negative Comments

- *Good intent with the book, but I think it may increase rather than decrease anxiety in some children.*
- *I felt the book was to scary for young children.*
- *Possibly a bit to long for younger children to take it all in.*
- *I dont recommend it for under 5s. The book highlights that it could be dangerous work and we could get hurt and now our boy gets very upset when I run off to calls, worried for me.*

Table 4. Positive and negative comments about the book provided in question 4.

Summary

The most common response when asked how often the book will be read was “once a month”. Participants also listed several instances of when the book would be read outside of the home with their children, including when children in their family visit, at the homes of family or friends who have been gifted the book, and at local schools or libraries.

Interestingly, 77% of participants agreed to some extent that the book helped them have conversations about their role with the children in their family. This score is noteworthy as the survey that was run before the book was distributed found that 77% of participants reported they felt equipped to address the concerns or worries that the children in their lives might have about their role. These findings may mean that the book was a helpful resource regardless of how equipped the person had felt previously. Alternatively, as hypothesised in the analysis of the first survey, the number of participants who indicated feeling equipped to address the concerns of the children in their lives may have been inflated, as participants may have felt uncomfortable reporting otherwise.

When asked about the flier included in the book, 84% of participants agreed that it gave their family added awareness about mental health and the support that is available. Additionally, when asked if they had any more comments, 85% of the comments said something positive about the book. Overall, the results of the survey indicate that the book was well received, and helpful to the participant’s families.





Appendix E - Endorsement from Clinical Psychologists

Gabrielle Couch, Clinical Psychologist

“This book provides some wonderful tools and opportunities for parents who work in Fire and Emergency to talk about the work they do with their children and help them to process any worries and difficult emotions that they may have around this. It also incorporates a flyer which includes information about how to access further support outside of the home if this is needed. Most of the responses to this book have been extremely positive, with parents citing beneficial effects for their children overall. However, a small group of parents expressed some concern around this book increasing anxiety or being too scary for younger children. Although there has been very limited research focused specifically on how books such as these may affect the children of first responders, there are some studies to suggest that picture book stories involving scary monsters for young children can help them to manage their fears by using a combination of both psychological and literary strategies such as minimising or eliminating ‘monsters’ by mentally changing or altering perception of them (Maynes, 2020). Similarly, in this story, Wolfgang appears to change his perception of his father’s work through learning effective coping strategies to minimise or eliminate his worries and fears (monsters). However, given every child is unique, it is important to ensure that parents use their expert judgement of their child, how they might respond to this story and whether it is appropriate for their age and stage of development.”

Reference: Mary-Louise Maynes, *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* volume 7, Article number: 63 (2020)

Gabrielle Couch
Clinical Psychologist
(MSc; DipClinPsych; MNZCCP)



Roger Shave, Registered Clinical Psychologist

I'm a Clinical Psychologist who has worked with fire fighters, support staff and their families for over 20 years. This project, led by Kris Kennett (on behalf of the NZ Firefighters Welfare Society (NZFFWFS) and FENZ) and brought to life through the delightfully clever story telling of Avril McDonald and the magical illustrations by Tatiana Minina, has produced a fantastic new resource in support of the wellbeing of children who have whanau or friends working in these challenging roles. The "Wolf was not sleeping" provides a very useful way of opening up discussions with children about their feelings around their loved one being a firefighter. Such discussions can help children identify, share and understand triggers and signs of feelings like worry and how to cope with these through a range of simple yet effective strategies which are outlined in the accompanying material to the book. No doubt this book will prove a very useful resource to all those working in FENZ who have young children or relatives in their lives. I congratulate all those involved in this project which also clearly reflects the NZFFWS core principle of "firefighters helping firefighters and their families" – well done team!

Catherine Gallagher, Clinical Practice Manager

I am a clinical psychologist who has done a lot of work with FENZ, with fire fighters, support staff and families. The fact that being a fire fighter has you going towards danger, rather than running away from it, can be confusing for kids. Although we all admire a hero, when that hero is my mum or dad (or my partner) and they are off being brave and we are at home waiting for them can feel scary. This book has addressed this issue beautifully and I'm sure it has prompted some really important discussions within families. In life we cannot avoid risk, and as children of fire fighters- this is even more the case. We know that ignoring such issues and hoping they go away does not work. To open up conversations and get children and their parents to talk about the feelings attached to what it means to be a fire fighter is really healthy- not only for the children and their emotional development, but also for the adults (including the fire fighter and their partner!). I can see real merit in this book continuing to be made available, especially as new staff come on board.

Well done the team that put this together. It's a great resource and I hope it continues to be well utilised.

Kind regards
Catherine Gallagher
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Whanaungatanga – We are better together